



IOWA RECOVERY TIMES

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FEMA



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GOVERNOR CULVER PRESENTS JUMPSTART CHECKS TO IOWANS

Beginning with the announcement of an initial \$40 million in state aid, the Jumpstart Iowa Initiative has been working to deliver relief to Iowans who need it the most.

At an Oct. 17 press conference in Cedar Rapids, Governor Culver presented flood victims George and Pat Neal with one of the first Jumpstart Housing Assistance checks. The \$29,000 check provided the couple with needed financial assistance to recover from the floods that hit their city earlier this year. Soon after, the governor traveled to Coralville and Waterloo to present more Jumpstart checks to recovering



Governor Chet Culver presents Cedar Rapids flood victims George and Pat Neal with a Jumpstart Housing check.

homeowners and small businesses.

Governor Culver also encouraged other Iowans affected by the disasters to apply for the program and emphasized his

commitment to Iowa's recovery.

"Jumpstart Iowa went from being an idea to putting funds into the hands of

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TAKE CARE WHEN HIRING CONTRACTORS

Take extra care when hiring contractors. That is the advice issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Iowa Attorney General's Office to Iowans working to rebuild after this summer's tornadoes, severe storms and flooding.

"As the weather is turning colder, we know many homeowners are taking steps to repair their homes for winter," said William L. Vogel, FEMA federal coordinating officer. "People should be especially alert for phone or door-to-door solicitors who hand

out flyers and promise to speed up the insurance or building permit process, and those who ask for large cash deposits or advance payments in full."

"Whether they are architectural, engineering,

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FEMA, STATE AND U OF IOWA COLLABORATE FOR SUCCESS

Behind the \$83.4 million provided to the University of Iowa for flood recovery stand the representatives of the university, state and federal agencies who have labored, sometimes in subterranean locales, over five months to qualify the school for grants.

Some days, working together means making sure no one is actually lost on the job.

“After walking through sections of the steam tunnels doing damage assessments, we had to take a head-count when we finished to make sure everyone was accounted for,” said David Fila, the FEMA public assistance project coordinator for the university.

Fila refers to the university’s power plant that serves as the primary source of heating for most campus buildings, including the hospitals and clinics. The plant pipes steam through an underground tunnel system 5.7 miles long. This summer’s floods filled 1.5 miles of tunnel and caused significant damage to pipe insulation, fan motors, ductwork, lighting and electrical devices. Floodwaters inundated the plant itself with over 23 feet of water, causing the plant to shut down; temporary machinery replaced the plant’s functions until its repair.

Fila notes the university ensured that reviews of damage to the power plant and tunnels, as well other damaged facilities on campus,



**Steam tunnels at the University of Iowa.
Photo by FEMA.**

happened quickly. “It’s all been a team effort. The university has been extremely responsive in giving access to the FEMA team of project specialists and the damage assessment crews.”

Such cooperation has increased the pace of recovery. “The university has made sure that the employees with expertise and site knowledge, such as those in the Facilities Management Department, were available to answer the questions that allow us to determine eligible costs for reimbursement.”

Fila also credits the involvement of Donna Pearcy of the university’s Office of Risk Management for helping to manage a process with multiple partners that has successfully led the university to receive more than \$83 million in state and federal aid to date. Additional

funding is also likely to be granted to the university.

“Multiple offices of the university and federal and state partners began the recovery process with the firm intention of working collaboratively to help one another succeed with our various responsibilities,” said Pearcy.

“The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) and FEMA understand the urgency the university faces in meeting critical academic deadlines,” continued Pearcy. “We have tailored a process to maximize the quick submission of all critical documentation for funding while making sure the pace of repair work steadily continues.”

Thus far, the collaboration between the university and FEMA has been successful. In addition to more than \$83 million granted to the University of Iowa, classes have continued for students during the recovery work with little interruption. The university is also looking forward to assessing possibilities for mitigation efforts to reduce the impact of future disasters. The university’s power plant opened October 28 – just in time for Old Man Winter’s approach.

From damage specialists in hardhats navigating through steam tunnels to the administrators working to secure funding for repairs, those who use the university’s services have many people to thank for the warmth they’re feeling.

TAKE CARE WHEN HIRING CONTRACTORS

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electrical, or general contractors, most service providers in the building industry are honest,” Vogel said, “but disasters attract scam artists. Some claim to be ‘FEMA certified,’ when in fact, FEMA neither certifies nor endorses any business for repairs.”

Tips for hiring help include getting a written estimate, calling references provided, asking for proof of insurance, obtaining required building permits, signing a complete contract

with all work clearly defined, and avoid paying with cash.

“Thanks to alert consumers and honest contractors, we’ve had relatively few consumer scams in the wake of this year’s tornadoes and floods,” said Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller. “But consumers still need to take care to avoid being cheated – we don’t want scams to flare up as the weather turns colder. The cardinal rules are to check out any contractor in advance, get a written contract and don’t pay large sums in advance.”

Report problems with a contractor or fraud to local authorities or the Consumer Protection Division of the Iowa Attorney General’s Office – 888-777-4590, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Consumers also may file a complaint online — and get more consumer tips and information — at www.IowaAttorneyGeneral.org. Complaints may also be directed to FEMA’s Inspector General’s Office at 1-800-323-8603.

LEARN TO COPE WITH POST-DISASTER STRESS

Mental health experts for the Iowa Department of Human Services urge Iowans to be aware of the signs and indicators of stress and, when seen, to seek free crisis counseling and to also refer people they know that they suspect are experiencing stress or depression to seek the free crisis counseling.

“Stress is a natural part of life,” said Bill Gardam, administrator of the Mental Health and Disability Services division of the DHS.

“You can feel stress when you have too much to do, or when you’ve had too little sleep, aren’t eating properly or have been ill, and especially when you experience a devastating life event, such as the flooding experience and losses in Iowa. During an emergency, people focus on their immediate needs. Stress caused by this experience can occur at any time, and often it appears weeks or months following the initial actual trauma events.”

Kelley Pennington, PhD., bureau chief responsible for Disaster Crisis Counseling services for DHS said, “Often, after a major disaster, people who suffered losses and damage to their homes or businesses just need someone to talk to, especially if they are feeling confused, anxious or angry.

“Iowans are remarkably self-reliant, a trait that usually serves us very well. But when disaster strikes, it’s important to reach out for help. Time spent now with people getting assistance can help many avoid longer term problems and help in the overall recovery process,” she said.

Via federal grants, the DHS has arranged for free crisis counseling statewide. To find a counselor in the Project Recovery Iowa post-disaster counseling program, call the toll-free Iowa Concern Hotline at 1-800-447-1985.

Pennington said, “There are many indicators of stress that people are probably already aware of but do not think about. Signs of stress include trouble concentrating or

remembering things, difficulty making decisions, excessively replaying events and circumstances of the flood, feeling depressed or sad much of the time, experiencing anxiety or fear, and having trouble sleeping or feeling overwhelmed.”

Gardam said mental health experts suggest a number of ways to relieve the symptoms of stress following a disaster:

- Take one thing at a time. Pick one urgent task and work on it. When that’s done, move on to the next.
- Be realistic. If you’re overwhelmed at home or at work, learn to say, “No!”
- Share your feelings. Don’t try to cope alone. Let friends and family provide support and guidance.
- Hobbies. Take a break and do something you enjoy.
- Be flexible and extra patient! Whether you’re at home or at work, arguing only increases stress. If you feel you’re right, stand your ground, but do so calmly and rationally. Be prepared to make allowances for other people’s opinions and to compromise.
- Do not let yourself become isolated. Seek out and maintain connections with friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, or church members. Talk about your experiences with them.
- Pay attention to your physical health as prolonged stress takes its toll on the body. Maintain a good diet and make sure you’re getting enough sleep. Get physical exercise every day. Walking is a great stress reliever.
- Don’t overlook the feelings of children as you deal with the situation. They need to feel that they can count on you for the extra attention, love and support needed to get through tough times.

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“Often, after a major disaster, people who suffered losses and damage to their homes or businesses just need someone to talk to...”

REBUILDING IDEAS AT THE IOWA DISASTER RECOVERY CONFERENCE

After this year's historic disasters, Iowans have been looking for ways to rebuild safer, stronger and smarter. In response, several state agencies are offering some innovative ideas at the Dec. 9 – 10 Iowa Disaster Recovery Conference in Coralville.

Titled "Learning from the Past/Planning for the Future," this two-day conference features informative discussions and presentations on topics ranging from sustainable design and green building to post-disaster waste management. Featured speakers include Greensburg (Kan.) Mayor Bob Dixon sharing his experiences of incorporating green design methods into his own city's rebuilding efforts after a devastating tornado, and Maryland Governor Parris Glendening, president of the Smart Growth Leadership Institute.

The conference also features an optional community design workshop on Dec. 11 that will apply the issues discussed during the conference, exploring sustainable strategies for communities to use as a roadmap for reconstruction efforts. Design professionals from the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the American Planning Association (APA), the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) will lead the workshop.

The Iowa Disaster Recovery Conference is open to the general public and requires a \$100 registration fee per person. The optional community design workshop requires a \$50 registration fee and is limited to the first 100 people, so interested parties are encouraged to register online.

**mark
THE date**

**LEARNING
FROM THE PAST
PLANNING
FOR THE FUTURE**

**The Iowa Disaster
Recovery Conference**

For a full schedule of events, or to register for the conference, visit www.iowalifechanging.com and select the "Iowa Disaster Recovery Conference" link.

THE FLOW OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DOLLARS

The issue: many local officials hear about Public Assistance (PA) funds being obligated, and believe that means the dollars automatically flow from the federal treasury into their coffers. Actually PA funds, both federal and state, flow to local applicants through the State in the form of a State warrant. Here's the process.

Funding of PA projects for this disaster:

- 90% federal
 - 10% state
1. State and FEMA teams work with applicants to identify potential PA projects.
 2. These projects are worked up in project worksheets, approved at the local level and submitted to FEMA and the State for approval at the Joint Field Office.
 3. Projects over \$1 million go to a special queue to be reviewed and

approved by FEMA headquarters and federal Office of Management and Budget.

4. Once approved all projects and dollars are termed "obligated." This means the federal money is in most cases is available to the applicant and is ready to be drawn down.

For small PA projects less than \$60,900

1. The 90 percent Federal share is advanced to the applicant by the State when the project is obligated by FEMA.
2. The 10 percent State share is reimbursed based on actual costs verified by the applicant, when all small projects are completed and closed out – meaning all work has been completed and all the financial information associated with small projects are completed and verified.

For large PA projects more than \$60,900

1. Applicants complete requests to the State for advances or reimbursements of federal funds as work is completed and costs are identified and documented. For example for a bridge project -- applicants would submit a request to the State when preliminary plans are completed, then perhaps again when initial work is completed, later when major construction finished, and lastly, when final costs are determined. This process is required typically to be done in stages because of federal regulations restricting federal cash on hand balances that can be maintained by applicants. Applicants may request advance funding up to 60 days out from anticipated expenditures and must pay out federal dollars drawn down, within 60 days of their receipt of advance funding.

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The Rebuild Iowa Office



The Rebuild Iowa Office is tasked with ensuring that the state rebuilds safer, stronger and smarter than before the 2008 disasters. The RIO is supported by a professional staff made up of existing state employees and hired full-time staff to allow it to achieve its mission, vision, goals and objectives. Throughout its initiatives, the RIO is committed to a recovery and rebuilding process that is fair and equitable to everyone.

www.rio.iowa.gov

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GOVERNOR CULVER PRESENTS JUMPSTART CHECKS TO IOWANS

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Iowans in need in less than a month, but I am not going to rest until every homeowner, business and community has recovered and rebuilt from this year's floods and tornadoes," said Governor Culver.

The Jumpstart Iowa Initiative is a state- and federally-funded program developed to address the financial needs of Iowa homeowners and business owners affected by the 2008 storms, flooding and tornadoes.

Visit the Jumpstart Iowa Initiative Web site, jumpstart.iowa.gov or call the toll-free number (1-866-849-0323) to find out more information about the program and how to apply for financial assistance.

LEARN TO COPE WITH POST-DISASTER STRESS

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- Seek crisis counseling.

Gardam stated, "holiday periods are normally times of stress and depression for many people. As Thanksgiving approaches, it is a good time for all of us to reach out to and touch base with our friends, neighbors and relatives that may have been affected by the severe weather. Ask how they are. Ask if they need anything. And, just generally, let them know that you care and are willing to help if it is needed. And, also, if you think it would be helpful, suggest they seek crisis counseling."

For more information, visit the Department of Human Services Web site at www.dhs.state.ia.us. See the "crisis counseling" link on the front page.

THE FLOW OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DOLLARS

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2. The State's 10 percent share is reimbursed based on actual cost documentation when the project is completed and closed out. For large projects this may be a process lasting several years out.

Clip & Save...

Federal Agencies

General FEMA Information	800.621.FEMA (3362)
TTY for hearing/speech impaired	800.462.7585
FEMA Fraud Detection	800.323.8603
National Flood Insurance Program	800.427.4661
TTY for hearing/speech impaired	800.427.5593
Social Security Administration	800.772.1213
U.S. Small Business Administration	800.659.2955
Internal Revenue Service	800.829.1040
TTY for hearing/speech impaired	800.829.4059
Tax-Related Disaster Relief	866.562.5227
Housing & Urban Development Hotline	800.669.9777
Department of Veterans Affairs	800.827.0648

Iowa Contacts

For up-to-date disaster and recovery information visit the Rebuild Iowa Office Web site at www.rio.iowa.gov.

To volunteer or make donations, contact:
Iowa Concern Hotline

800.447.1985

If you have questions about consumer fraud, contact:
Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division
888.777.4590 or 515.281.5926 or
www.state.ia.us/government/ag/

Disaster Unemployment Information	800.JOB.IOWA
Iowa Mortgage Help	877.622.4866 or www.iowaMortgageHelp.com
Rebuild Iowa Office	866.849.0323
Iowa Other Needs Assistance	800.659.2955
Other Needs Assistance	866.434.4692